

# Environment Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** HB-5224

**Title:** AN ACT CONCERNING SHARK FINNING.

**Vote Date:** 3/8/2024

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Substitute

**PH Date:** 2/28/2024

**File No.:**

***Disclaimer:** The following JOINT FAVORABLE Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.*

## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Environment Committee  
Rep. Joseph P. Gresko, 121st Dist.  
Rep. Mary M. Mushinsky, 85th Dist.  
Rep. David Michel, 146th Dist.

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

The spiny dogfish is a small species of shark which inhabits many shallow temperate areas of the ocean, including in the Long Island Sound. Demand for shark fins has driven a market for removing the fin of the shark and returning the de-finned shark to the ocean. Many people find this practice to be cruel, and it has played a part in the spiny dogfish being classified as a vulnerable species. This bill therefore seeks to reduce the practice of shark finning.

## **SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE:**

The JFS changed the name of the bill from the original title of: AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF SPINY DOGFISH.

## **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

### **KATIE S. DYKES, COMMISSIONER, CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

DEEP supports the concept of this bill because it will help conserve sharks and will bring Connecticut into regulatory alignment with neighboring states. The bill also includes exceptions for certain reasonable uses of shark fins that will not undercut shark conservation efforts.

DEEP suggests re-titling the bill to reflect the broad protections and benefits it will provide beyond just spiny dogfish. Broadening the title of the bill will prevent confusion and more accurately represent the breadth of species that are being protected under the bill.

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

### **William Hyatt, Vice-Chair, Connecticut Fisheries Advisory Council**

The FAC states that the legislation aligns with federal restrictions on shark finning that were implemented in 2022. They state it also codifies in statute rules that already exist in the Regulations of CT State Agencies prohibiting the possession and sale of fins from spiny dogfish. The FAC agrees with the exemption for "any smoothhound" also known as smooth dogfish. The sale of fins from smooth dogfish is allowed under both federal law and the rules in other Northeast states. As such, it is their belief that any further restrictions on the sale of legally harvested smooth dogfish would be unnecessarily wasteful.

### **Bill Lucey, Long Island Soundkeeper, Save the Sound**

Save the Sound supports this legislation as it will bring Connecticut into regulatory alignment with neighboring states and fishery management entities. The bill also includes exceptions for certain reasonable uses of shark fins that will not undermine general shark conservation management. They state that bills from previous years regarding this issue were worded in a way that would have criminalized Long Island Sound anglers from even catching either of the dogfish species.

### **Annie Hornish, Connecticut Senior State Director, The Humane Society**

The Humane Society supports this bill because it will protect sharks, including the spiny dogfish the sale of shark fins in Connecticut. The demand for shark fins drives the practice of shark finning, in which a shark's fins are cut off and the rest of shark is thrown back into the ocean. It is her belief that a ban on the sale and trade in shark fins will not harm fisherman because economic impact is minimal.

### **Dr. James Lonbella, President/Executive Director, CT Votes for Animals**

The testifier supports prohibits the possession, sale, trade, or distribution of shark fins sourced by removing fins from sharks and discarding the rest of shark back into the ocean.

### **Peter J. Auster, PhD, Senior Research Scientist, Mystic Aquarium**

The testifier believes the bill will greatly enhance the conservation of sharks locally, regionally, and globally. When enacted, Connecticut will join neighboring northeastern states and others in the US, assuming a strong stewardship role for conserving these vulnerable species of marine wildlife.

### **Jamila Viandier**

The testifier provides a summary of the history and current statistics concerning shark populations. They also express the belief that the bill would bring Connecticut in line with other neighboring states.

### **Karen Laski, Board Member, CT Votes for Animals**

The testifier expresses the belief that shark finning is a sadistic practice which harms the shark, the ecosystem, and impacts the carbon cycle.

**The following individuals expressed support for the bill, with some referencing the impact this bill would have to protect endangered species:**

**Ava Fiore; Monica Cotton; Lynch Laura; Bonnie Margolis; Mary La Sala; Maizie Ogren; Andrea Dobras; Sheriden Franklin; Emily Rose Arroyo; Maure Briggs; Russ & Cornelia Fortier; Julie Stankiewicz; Joanne Huber; Lisa Mentos; Stephanie Gatto; Danielle Crocker; Cindy-Lee Vaporis; Roberta Helling; Jeanne Martin; Wendy Horowitz; Shirley McCarthy; Anne Mazzone; Mark Brault; Barbara Kil; Wendy Ruggeri; Chris Kerin;; Anonymous 1; Valerie Woodruff; Alison Zyla; Paula Snedeker; Deb Sutfin; Andrea Barlow; Jeffrey Atwood; Peter Herrmann; Melissa Leonard; Cathy Popping; Jane Ciarlone; Eileen Sypher; Laurie Goodman; Ronaldo DeGray; Jill Alibrandi; Katherine Stapp; Val Maloney; Mandy Wieting; Ingrid Casas; Dorothy Rich; Pat Hamron; Elizabeth Quattrochi; Michelle Palmeri; Jeanne Dubino; Susan King; Anonymous 2; Sally Bovino; Lisa Haut; Sally Westcott; Joan Mccoy; Debra Bologna; Sue Kautz; Wendy Shanahan; Tamara Smith; Phillip Sobask; Glaucia Lolli; Sam Edwards; Keeley Mangeno; Sherry Wernicke; Christine Kaminski; Kate Marchwinski; Kelly Marchwinski; Andrea Kerin; Kira Hanner; Albert Rabinovich; Hope Maruzo; Bonnie West; Sheryl Pierson; Lisa Tobias; Tom Tierney; Pam Pinto; Catherine Foley; Valerie Charbonneau; Laura Boyd; Marlene Wilhelm; Regina Milano; Barbara Biel; Elizabeth Kiernan; Teresa Eickel; Nan Zyla-Wisensale; Susan Linker**

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

None Expressed.

**Reported by: Judy Ganswindt**

**Date: 3/19/2024**